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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the major studies of international and national approaches to media ethics and describes the various academic and global contexts for international media ethics study. It suggests methodology for helpful, if embryonic, comparison and for accurate pattern recognition. The paper explores the question of whether there are universals--common ethical values or guidelines--in national and cultural approaches to media ethics, and hypothesizes three such universals based upon areas of common ground within available media ethics codes, guidelines, and similar documents. Five diagrams and 61 notes are included; a bibliography of 12 articles and 22 books is attached. (Author/SR)

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Abridged Abstract

COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ETHICS: IN SEARCH OF UNIVERSALS

This paper reviews the major studies of international and national approaches to media ethics and describes the various academic and global contexts for international media ethics study. Methodology is suggested for helpful, if embryonic, comparison and for accurate pattern recognition. The question of whether there are universals--common ethical values or guidelines--in national and cultural approaches to media ethics is explored. Three such universals are hypothesized based upon areas of common ground within available media ethics codes, guidelines, and similar documents.

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COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ETHICS:

IN SEARCH OF UNIVERSALS

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Title: COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ETHICS:

IN SEARCH OF UNIVERSALS

Abstract: A review of the literature to date reveals that comprehensive studies of international media ethics are necessarily incomplete. Not all countries have media codes of ethics or comparable "instruments" by which to scientifically test and compare national standards; moreover, countries frequently change, deregulate, officially censure, or discard formal ethical systems.

Methodology for comparison must meet not only these challenges, based upon the unreliability and non-permanence of instruments, but must also take into account numerous cultural "translatory" problems discussed within this paper. These problems are linguistic, cultural, historical, methodological, socio-political, and philosophical, to name only a few which are discussed.

Existing studies have included not more than sixty of over two hundred countries, within existing data. Most comparative studies, of which the most significant are reviewed within, are European based and are particularly concerned as much with what might be called "issue analysis" within codes as with linguistic or ethics analysis.

This paper reviews the existing major studies, describes the surrounding contexts for international media ethics study, and suggests embryonic methodology for helpful comparison, and accurate pattern recognition, of trans-cultural common ground.

COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ETHICS:

IN SEARCH OF UNIVERSALS

In pondering communication ethics, one might ask "How do ethical principles and practices differ worldwide among communication professionals and those to whom they answer?" Understanding national, cultural, and regional perspectives about media ethics is valuable. However, the companion question is equally significant: "Is there a global mass communication ethic?"

In this paper, representative attempts to answer that question prior to 1987 will be investigated. Proposed refinement of methodology and overview suggestions in defining the field will also be presented. More importantly, important implications of the thematic companion questions will be addressed.

THE QUEST FOR UNIVERSALS

To date research reveals at least three major areas of worldwide concern within the field of comunication ethics. The first could be called "the quest for truth", which includes a global concern with media "objectivity" and "accuracy". The second could be described as the "desire for responsibility" among social (cf. professional) communicators. This concern includes differing regional emphases upon professionalism, accountability, justice, equality, loyalty priorities (to government, public, peers, personal integrity), adherence to social mores (e.g., cultural notions of secrecy, privacy, source protection, etc.), and ultimate motivation issues (such as conflict of interest, bribery, and self-promotion). The third, which might be called the "call for free expression", includes differing regional emphases upon free flow of information, censorship, regulation, freedom of the press and of speech.

While these three areas can be categorized in numerous other ways, and are suggestive, not conclusive, they are each, based upon the research available to date, candidates for "universal" status. That is, each of the three concerns (and perhaps others) may prove to be common to human beings as individuals or to collective forms such as societies, cultures, or nations.

However, such a claim may not be assumed upon speculative evidence nor used as a generalization. In the discussion which follows, every aspect of this hypothesis will be cross-examined. The definition of "universal" will be distinguisehd from "absolute". Instruments for testing such claims will be closely inspected for strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, even if "universals", or "representative universals" (to be defined), do exist within communication ethics, what is learned from them? Do communication ethics "universals" represent dangers? Value? Of what nature? Are universals important? For whom?

The last set of questions may be the most important and thus will be addressed first. Why should it matter if such universals exist? After all, one could claim that there are at least three universal human behavioral patterns, and probably others. The human species 1) sleeps, 2) ingests (food and liquid), and 3) breathes. There is nothing counter-intuitive or provocative about such a claim. Why, then, look for universals regarding a global ethic of communication? Why assume, if universals are found, that they have meaning or utility?

Moreover, even if "surface" universals are found--such as "truth", "responsibility", and "freedom", one hypothesis of this research is that beneath such seeming universals are unique differences. Hence the surface universal may be an illusion. However, the corollary hypothesis, paradoxically

states that beneath these unique differences are deeper, genuine universals. Media codes which advocate "truth", "freedom", and "responsibility" in the United States, the Soviet Union, and Iran have vastly different contexts surrounding those three words. But a larger context shapes national contexts.

Thus surface universals may prove non-universal at the national level of inspection. Nevertheless, within each country human beings, whether communicators or "public", may desire aspects of "truth, responsibility, and freedom" to be reflected in group communication (e.g., mass media) in ways which are truly universal. No public or media profession rewards a weather report which warns of a blizzard if an extreme heat wave is the actual forecast. At some level, the expectation of truth-telling and the aversion to media lying becomes genuinely universal. Surface universals may be non-universal at the national level but common to humanity at a more basic or transcendent level.

The twin hypothesis mentioned above may be illustrated by inspecting a bowl of sugar, salt, and white sand. From a distance, the bowl appears to hold only one substance--sugar, salt, or sand--depending upon what the viewer expects, has been told, and the surrounding environmental factors. However, this surface homogeneity vanishes when the chemist analyzes each third of the bowl and finds sodium chloride (salt) in the left third of the bowl, $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$ (sugar) in the center, and a mixture of

chemical compounds (mixed rock particles) in the right third of the bowl.

Nevertheless, to the sub-atomic physicist, such distinctive elements may disappear at another level of observation. At the most finite levels elemental differences may not be nearly as perceptible as a universal population of electrons, positrons, and less visible phenomena such as energy fields and the interconversion of matter with energy. Salt, sugar, and sand disappear.

Thus the discussion of "universal" principles and practices must include the notion of level. What is "united" at one level of reality may appear divided at another. What sounds or looks identical out of context may be part of a specific, unique phenomenon at another level. As such distinctions, subtleties, and levels become apparent, the challenge of identifying both the illusion of universals and universals themselves becomes far larger, and more revealing. From this standpoint, the universal may be important not only <u>horizontally</u> (what human beings hold in common) but also <u>vertically</u> (in understanding the different levels of communication and of perception). The contemplation of universals may be useful to research <u>and</u> the communication process, not only among scholars but among nations and peoples.

DEFINING UNIVERSALS

> Simultaneously and parallel with the search for the universal principles of deontology of the journalist's profession in all its various dimensions and manifestations, it is right to regard as an especially urgent task the attainment of common understanding among the journalists of all countries in respect to the ethical standards by which they should be guided in international life. The sooner the collection of moral standards and principles in this sphere becomes a universally accepted reference point for journalists, the better.
>
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> Moscow State University[1]

That a Soviet professor (above) and a U.S. professor (this author) agree upon a central theme of this paper provides symbolic unity. However, such a joint statement is not necessarily held to be true by all human beings, professors, media professionals, citizens of the United States or of the Soviet Union.

Throughout the scholarly literature dealing with "universals" is the underlying assumption that the phenomenon in question (i.e., universal) pervades, transcends, or includes all elements within its universe. If the astrophysical universe (of stars) is chosen as an example, then the statement "It is a universal trait of stars to be gaseous," if true, would hold that all stars in the universe are currently gaseous. A smaller universe could be specified, for example, Australians, in which case the statement "It is a universal characteristic of

Australians to wear hats" would mean, if true, that each Australian wears a hat.

Within the natural sciences the quest for universals is exemplified by Einstein's search for a unified field theory, attempts to apply the Fibonacci series systematically to the laws of nature, and similar efforts over many centuries.[2]

Moreover, a "growing literature on the subject of 'ethical universals and a unified theory of human nature'"[3] springs from sociology (e.g., Selznick's "Natural Law and Sociology"), anthropology (e.g., Linton's "Universal Ethical Principles: An Anthropological View;" Mead's Continuities in Cultural Evolution), and philosophical ethics itself (e.g., Brandt's Ethical Theory).[4] The serious discussion of universals is both broad and ancient.

The more embryonic "discipline" of communication or particularly the subdiscipline of mass communcation ethics has not yet developed a sizable literature defining universal tendencies. However, from one perspective, the early attempts of Americans (such as Shannon, Weaver, Schramm, and others) to construct simple models of communication, was an attempt to distill simple universal essences from a complex of situations and technologies. The Canadians Innis and McLuhan looked for universal "laws of media," although Innis described these in humbler, more tentative terms. European critical thinkers, structuralists, hermaneuticists, and others have shown

important tendencies in developing an approach to the philosophy of communication, in which more social elements (structures, class relations, languages) may be seen as central, if not universal, to communication's essence.[5]

Nevertheless, a precise attempt to <u>determine</u> specific universals within media ethics is needed. The following definitions, albeit embryonic, grow out of that necessity.

1. <u>Universal</u>: phenomenon or quality currently extending to an entire selected universe of elements.
2. <u>Absolute</u>: phenomenon or quality extending to an entire selected universe of elements <u>throughout history</u>.
3. <u>Representative Universal</u>: phenomenon or quality extending to the entire subset of representative elements within a selected universe.
4. <u>Subconscious Universals</u>: intangible essences, thoughts, instincts, and feelings <u>thought</u> to be common throughout all elements within a selected <u>human</u> universe.
5. <u>Overarching (Conscious) Universals</u>: concrete, verifiable, articulated phenomena common to all elements within the selected universe.
6. <u>Representative Subconscious Universals</u>: combine definitions 3 and 4.
7. <u>Representative Overarching (Conscious) Universal</u>: combine definitions 3 and 5.

Such definitions are meaningful only to the degree that they provide useful distinctions. In the forthcoming description of international communication ethics, these terms will serve as helpful categories. Consider the following examples of usage.

Imagine that within one province of India, it is considered bad luck for a snake to cross one's path. Upon

being interviewed the residents of that province contend, and their records authenticate, that this belief is an historical absolute. For them, it is true across all memory of time. In this case, within their province the belief is also true across space. Thus the belief is a provincial but not a global universal: some provinces and countries do not believe in superstition and others do not have snakes. To be a global universal, a thought (belief, action, attitude, etc.) must be true across all populated space; an absolute must be true across recorded time. Hence an absolute universal (e.g., human beings have no more than two eyes and two ears), if true, has been true throughout known history and is consistent throughout every location populated by human beings.

If the previous snake analogy is used, let us further postulate that the fear of snakes, particularly crossing one's path, is sensed but not articulated by Indians within the province. Perhaps the residents share what the psychologist, Karl Jung, called the collective subconscious. They seem to know intuitively, but never discuss, a feeling or sensation (e.g., millions of people worldwide supposedly dream of falling or flying). Such behavior would give indication of a subconscious universal.

On the other hand, suppose parents uniformly teach children "Beware the snake crossing your path." Perhaps the local religious instruction warns of the evil attached to

snakes. Then a more formal, or conscious universal belief might exist among the denizens of the province.

Finally, if it were impossible to determine empirically what every Indian within the province believed about snakes crossing paths, a representative grouping (e.g., all leaders; equal numbers of men, women, and male and female children; a random selection, etc.) might be interviewed, as within a sample for an empirical study. If agreement existed among the representative group, then a representative universal could be determined, that is, a shared concern among the group of representatives.

Whether the group is truly representative, whether all others would agree with them, cannot necessarily be determined, and thus a representative universal may be significantly different from, but is nevertheless a type of, universal. Hence a representative universal may be neither truly universal nor truly representative; like a representative government, a random sample, or a selective survey, the statistical reliability of a representative universal depends upon the nature, size, and quality of the representative subset.

It is empirically impossible to determine a pure global absolute for communication ethics. All people, living and dead, may not be successfully interviewed about the moral role of mass media within society. However, representative instruments--international declarations and communication

law, national press codes, press council documents--may be inspected as conscious statements intended to represent institutions and populations.

These are different from subconscious universals which are more difficult to codify. Consider Hans Jonas's observation:

> All men (sic), so it is said, desire to be happy; and it is said not as a statistical observation but with the tacit corollary that this lies in man's very nature, that is, as a statement of essence.6

Jonas's statement rings true, but one needs some basis of proof, that Jonas is more representative than philosophers who argue that "all men (sic), by virtue of their tragic behavior worldwide, evidently desire to be unhappy." Jonas's statement, while intuitively true, can be challenged by an antithesis, also intuitively true. Which is representative? Of whom?

Within the empirical paradigm, overarching conscious statements may be more useful for movement beyond reasoned but unrepresentative conjecture. For example, at the Meeting of Experts on Contribution to an Ethic of Communication (Ottawa, Canada, June 13, 1977) a joint statement was made:

> An ethic of communication for the modern world should be based upon such values as peace, freedom, and mutual respect which are common to all mankind and at the same time should take into account the great cultural and political diversity so evident in the world today.7

This document, to whatever degree it is truly sincere, representative, and binding, is less subconscious, and less individually interpretive than preceding work of Jonas. It represents the thought of a group, each of whom was chosen to represent a country, within an organization which represents several dozen countries. At least quantitatively, the document is more representative.

Consider the study of "Broadcast Advertising of Medical Products and Services: Its Regulations by Other Nations" by the American Jon T. Powell.[8] He draws in his conclusions a hinting at representative conscious universals:

> The restraints imposed on medical advertising in this study reflect a worldwide concern for protecting the public in a sensitive area where the problems of ignorance and misinformation are magnified by false hope. These braodcast codes have designed to avoid promotion of those medical products and services which are considered detrimental to public health...9

Within his universe of seventeen countries,[10] Powell posits a measure of representative conscious universality. codes are consciously formulated; those constructing codes to some degre represent different nations, geographically distributed, and Powell thus ventures the phrase "reflect a

worldwide concern." At least on the surface, several documents within seventeen countries point toward an overarching ethic which requires that communication not promote, among other products, unhealthy "health" products and "medicines".

If these countries truly represent a global concern (note: many countries do not use mass advertising), and if these codes truly represent the populations behind them, and if codes are a valid instrument, which mean what they say, and if hidden variables are consistent worldwide, and if a single scholar's (e.g., Powell's) research is accurate, and if the larger global universe confirms this study, then it is possible that the study could point toward a "universal".

However, there are several significant "ifs" listed above. There is a significant gap between seventeen countries and two hundred; between static codes and dynamic people, between the selected research of one individual and the universe of all available, accurate research. These and many other gaps raise two highly significant questions: "Are Conscious Universals An Illusion?" "Are Codes of Ethics Valid Data for Cross-National Research?"

ARE CONSCIOUS UNIVERSALS AN ILLUSION?

Kaarle Nordenstreng and various co-authors have sought to amass and discuss different types of national, multinational, and global instruments which treat international media regulation, policy, ethics, and guidelines.

In one instance, Nordenstreng and Alanen analyzed forty-four international community documents:

> the so called instruments of international law (the Charter of the United Nations, internationl conventions, etc.), as well as other instruments of less legally binding nature such as declarations and resolutions of the UN and its various specialized agencies, above all UNESCO, which has a particular mandate in the field of culture and communication. The instruments analyzed here include 12 conventions, 14 declarations, and 18 resolutions.11

In a much larger work, in which Nordenstreng and Hannikainen primarily inspect the Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO, they provide an "Inventory of Codes of Ethics" in which a "crude content analysis" of fifty national and multinational codes reveals patterns to be discussed later within this chapter.[12] While common sense itself offers hunches about why universal international agreement would be difficult to obtain and maintain, the research of Nordenstreng may qualify him to be a leading voice for

articulating the key difficulties in the conscious charting of a universal media ethic.

As Nordenstreng explained at the International Organization of Journalists in his Presidential Address (Paris, 1977), even among a specialized profession of communicators, such as journalists, there are significant difficulties in reaching global consensus:

> It is very problematic to construct a code of conduct which would be clear both in conceptual and practical terms and, furthermore, applicable under different socio-political circumstances of journalists themselves. And secondly, we know from experience--for example considering the debate around UNESCO's Draft Declaration on the use of mass media--that these kinds of issues easily turn into controversies among non-professional political ambitions, in which the origianl substance gets easily lost.13

The example used by Nordenstreng, the Mass Media Declaration of UNIESCO is an excellent case in point. Instead of collective wisdom emerging regarding a pan-national communication ethic, three proposals for an alternative text to the Declaration were drafted.

The Proposal For a "Socialist Alternative" Text represented twelve countries; the Proposal For a "Western Alternative" Text represented ten countries; the Proposal For a "Non-Aligned Alternative" Text represented member states of UNESCO belonging to the Group of Non-Aligned Countries and to the Group of Seventy-Seven.[14] Prevailing

political differences are not unrelated to the more recent withdrawal of the United States and England from UNESCO and continuous debate within the organization about the role and regulation of communication worldwide.

The expectation that international law might provide a universal standard for professional communicators is also unrealistic. As Nordenstreng and Alanen indicate:

> Under close scrutiny international law is not found to set many direct standards on journalists. Setting standards on the contents of communication is, according to the principles of international law, the duty of states, which may within their power of legislation and administration control the information media in a country. Besides, only a few of the most authoritative instruments, those namely of the international conventions, treat explicitly of the communication media nd the journalists.15

Nor do more informal gatherings, such as conferences among media "experts"--whether academic, professional, or policy delegates--necessarily achieve a state of Utopian agreement. As Clifford Christians, delegate to the Brikeland Conference in Norway, noted, representatives were as interested in conflicting points of view as in overlapping causes:

> The International Mass Media Institute of Kristiansand, Norway, played host to a conference on media ethics last May. One hundred delegates were invited from seventeen different countries, including Austria, France, Holland, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Finland, Uganda, Nigeria, England and Switzerland.... The three most prominent ethical positions which appeared were Marxist,

> secular humanist and Judeo-Christian. Rather than work toward a bland consensus or avoid ultimate questions, the delegates saw their role as struggling to understand opposing perspectives while defending and articulating their own.16

Possibly the greatest concern among those working within the field of international relations is implementation of paper agreements. As Dutch scholar Cees Hamelink has written in "Toward an International Code of Ethics":

> There are numerous obstacles on the road to such a code and...there ought to be sufficient skepticism vis-a-vis its implementation.17

If international political law is consistently violated, why would international communication codes be more likely to remain inviolate?

Beyond the problems of negotiation, compromise, political maneuvering, and implementation, are the deeper questions relating to authority, control, homogenization, and imposition. Would a universal ethics law truly unite people or simply expand the division between those who are regulated and those who regulate? Would national and cultural differences be preserved or homogenized by such legislation? Would such "universals" be imposed, and thus not truly universal, or "discovered" (cf. "revealed") to be already subconsciously present?

Many fears and areas of resistance surface when uniform regulation, even gentler "guidelines" and "codes" are suggested. There is much evidence to suggest that conscious

universals, if manufactured, to the degree that they must be imposed, are not in fact universal, but involve the consensus of a majority imposed upon at least one minority, or the consensus of at least one minority imposed upon the majority.

If conscious universals are not manufactured (through negotiation, compromise, etc.), but rather recognized in the course of discussion (as at an international convention of musicians who discover the same folk melody, with different words, common to their heritages), there is no longer the problem of imposition and control, nor of negotiation compromise. Such discoveries, however, usually pertain more to the discovery of a common subtext, or hidden subconscious, than to the forging of paper agreements. Such subconscious overlap is interesting, but is it concrete?

ARE SUBCONSCIOUS UNIVERSALS TANGIBLE?

The psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961) posited a collective subconscious, in which all human beings touch the horizon of a collective race memory. It does not necessarily follow that all human beings therefore subconsciously, love truth, responsibility, and freedom. To be sure, the line of thought is provocative; the quest to find common dreams, subconscious desires (as in the Freudian

tradition), symbols, and essences has been no less the province of philosophy and anthropology, than of sociology, and of psychology. Nor have there been a scarcity of archaelogists, scientists, and theologians who have posited some common "homing" instinct in which human beings innately but vaguely perceive a lost Motherland, Eden, Atlantis, or indecipherable deja vu sensation--which is translated in other modes (e.g., religion, ritual, the quest for 'roots') or suppressed entirely.[18]

In the field of communication it would seem that certain other subconscious impulses could be labelled primary, if not primal. For example "the longing for self-expression" might be suggested as universal. Who could argue conclusively that monks who take vows of silence do not nevertheless communicate or that autistic children have never experienced at least the "longing" for self-expression? Could not "the longing for self-expression" be common to all human beings, at least hypothetically?

If one suggests, however, that the longing for truthful communication is a subconcscious compulsion, there may be an intuitive resonance with the assertion, but where is the weight of evidence? Magicians, political scientists, advertisers, and cosmeticians, among others, have all argued that, in various ways human beings enjoy being <u>deceived</u>, not shown the truth. Data proving the presence of subconscious

universals must be more indirect than evidence of conscious universals and thus involves inference and deduction, not observable evidence. If subconscious universals exist, an element of Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" is necessary to unconditionally accept their presence, let alone their identity. One may leap as easily to the hypothesis that "human beings wish to be deceived" as to the hypothesis that "human beings wish to be told the truth." From an empirical standpoint, more tangible and specific evidence must be investigated. However, subconscious universals are neither useless nor imaginary, as will be discussed later.

ARE CODES OF ETHICS VALID EVIDENCE OF CROSS-NATIONAL PATTERNS?

Possibly the most useful evidence of representative conscious communication ethics is the media code. Ideally (and this ideal will be later cross-exained), the media code's value is fivefold. 1) A code of ethics is concrete. However much interpretations of a code differ, the code itself is, even when revised, fixed. It is tangible, written (in the vast majority of cases), reproducible, historically dated, and available for study. 2) The ideal code is representative: it may represent the professional, government, or people of a country, institution, or group of

countries or institutions. 3) Ideally, a code of ethics is focussed. Unlike a charter of interntaional relations, national constitution, or multinational trade law, the mission of a code of ethics is specifically to delineate some measure of universal ethical principles and practices consistently throughout the universe to which it applies. Communication ethics are usually central, not peripheral, to its particular purpose. 4) A code of ethics is intentional. Whatever its relationship to subconscious universals, a code is consciously, and often laboriously, conceived. It may be the product of hours, days, even years of conscious thought, revision, collective negotiation, and critical scrutiny. 5) A code carries some degree of meaning. Many codes are strictly symbolic, others nominal, still others inspirational. Nevertheless, whatever weight a code carries in the actual influence of human behavior, it is suggestive of either altruistic ideals or self-interested buffers which reflect upon the authors and, to some degree, those they represent.

For this reason media codes of ethics, not the reports of Press Councils nor declarations of international organizations, nor theories of subconscious universals, have been chosen for the empirical instruments to be used in the studies explained below. Nevertheless, as data for research, and as

meaningful statements, codes have numerous weaknesses. Many of these dangers are worthy of specific consideration.

THE LIMITATIONS OF CODES OF ETHICS AS TRUE INDICATORS

1. Global representation?
   As Clement Jones pointed out in 1980, there are more countries without than countries that do have Codes of Ethics.19 While the number of countries adopting codes is steadily growing, can codes currently be said to be globally representative?

2. Clear meaning?
   While the word code may mean "law of prescriptive principles," it may also mean a "system of secret writing or signals." Codes of ethics are not always merely the former and may require crytographers, of a sort, to determine their exact meaning (many are deliberately vague or ambiguous) and the motivation behind them.

3. Spatio-temporal translation?
   Codes do not easily compare across national, media, and date boundaries. A Tanzanian Press Code of 1957 might be three steps removed (time, nation, medium) from a French Television Entertainment Code of 1986.

4. Democratic representation?
   A code may not be truly representative of its country or institution. It may have been adopted by a minority elite, a figurehead assembly, or an overthrown political regime. Thus it may be obsolete, impotent, doctored for appearances, politically abridged, or poorly translated when transferred from one nation to another.

5. Superficial similarities?
   Codes, by virtue of a tendency toward telegraphic compression, may lend themselves to false similarities, as in the previous discussion of surface universals. Stripped of

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national and ethnic context, key words such as "responsibility" may appear identical in a Spanish and Turkish document, but have vastly different meanings, contexts, and applications.

6. Hollow facades?
Codes are often rhetorical, rather than genuine. Pushed to its extreme, this argument, as articulated here by Merrill and Odell, renders all codes camouflaged, meaningless, and impotent.

> As rhetorical devices--and surely that is what they are--codes of ethics are so nebulous, fuzzy, ambiguous, contradictory, or heavy-handed that the few journalists who do read them are perplexed, confused, bewildered, angered, and scared off.20

7. Committee compromises?
Codes are often group mosaics written for posterity, if not prosperity. Like the elephant (intended to be a horse) created by a committee, codes may be the result of compromises and negotiations. A fragmented collage of fractured principles, in one sense representative of none of the participating delegates or committee members, may result.

8. Super-imposed values?
Codes are not always indigenous, and thus not purely representative. A code which is copied by a developing country or imported from a colonial power may not be supported by the majority of nationals.

9. Genuine ideals?
Codes are written for audiences. An individual within a committee may wish to please peers upon the committee and thus revise views or wording. Moreover, the committee may wish to please a larger body which will not ratify the code beyond anticipated parameters. The ratifyiing body, or its representatives in turn may be seeking approval by a higher body or government, inspection agency, regulatory power, etc. A code may in many instances represent the expectations of its audience more than the

views of its constituency. As Jones makes clear, codes are not always altruistic and may serve the interest of those writing as protection against or legitimization by another power. Jones, for example, notes a "strong thread of self-interest and self-preservation."21

10. Politically neutral?
Finally, all acts of research themselves have ethical implications. Barney and Black argue that Codes of Ethics are themselves unethical.22 If they are correct in assuming that codes point toward inhumane, authoritarian, and unnecessarily restrictive dangers, then studying and thus promoting codes, like studying nuclear weapons applications, is not without ethical implications. This argument will be considered in more depth later.

To this list, must be added the general problems of research such as Robert Rosenthal's caution that researchers often "discover what they are looking for," rather than making sense of the totality of favorable and unfavorable data. In an even more self-reflexive mode, Krippendorff asks the researcher/scholar to "draw others like yourself," that is, as an ethical imperative, "when involving others in your constructions, always grant them (those addressed/studied) the same autonomy you practice in constructing them."[23] Such a line of thought reminds one of the larger ethnocentric problems of cross-cultural and cross-national research in which "foreign" peoples (cf. codes) are studied through one's own bias, language, and methods, not seen through native eyes.

CROSS-NATIONAL METHODOLOGY

The final consideration leads to a larger field of concerns. Must not the German methods by which Cuban bananas and Italian grapes are compared also be inspected? Some of the dangers facing the researcher who would compare national codes include:

1. Nations are not always as different as cultures, classes, or cults within them. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants in Eastern Canada may have more values (e.g., regarding an ethic of communication) in common with W.A.S.P.s in the Western United States, than with French-Canadians in the Province of Quebec. Nationality does not fully condition attitudes and behavior. Generalization or assumed differences lead to inaccuracy.

2. Is national identity definable? There are over two hundred languages in India; there are more Moslems in the Soviet Union than in most Arabic States. The so-called "hyphenated Americans" (e.g., Mexican-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Afro-Americans, etc.); may have as many differences as similarities.

3. Within the social sciences a distinction has been created between the "emic" (understanding a culture or nation within its own terms) aspect and "etic" (incorporating different aspects of many cultures or nations into a general hypothesis) aspect of comparative methodology.

4. Research ethnocentricity is not necessarily a generalized bias (cf. chauvinism) toward one's own country and indiscriminate bias against other countries. The bias of a U.S. researcher toward Soviet codes, for example, may be different than his/her bias toward French codes. Subtle and subjective world-views color the research methodology as much through subconscious attitude and personal background as through language and mindset. But the same U.S. research may also

have a bias against (some types of) U.S. codes, or a bias for Swiss codes. Generalizations prevent understanding. Bias is neither uniform nor totally predictable.

5. Premises and modes of inspection may themselves be culture-specific or nation-specific. Is the notion of the "universal" universally held? Is comparative methodology? Is mass media research empirical research common to all countries?

6. Cross-cultural and cross-national communication are amplifications of the deeper difficulties encountered between any two individuals who attempt to communicate. Consider Doob's observation in the preface of Cross-Cultural Research Methods:

> Are not cross-cultural problems similar to or at any rate not qualitatively different from those existing when one person talks to another person within the same culture? Ostensibly we speak the same language, but do we?24

7. Countries, like cultures, whatever their resemblances, are nevertheless unique. More pertinent to the inspection of codes are Jones' remarks:

> No two countries have exaclty the same philosophy about mass communications, nor do any countries have exactly the same social, economic, political, and legal structures. Naturally any Code of Ethics which one country may evolve will also be likely to differ from that of another, even a neighboring country.25

It is significant to note that a country has a unique social, economic, political and legal system, and is thus merely superficially different from other countries.

8. The complexity of comparing nations, based upon the factors above, is further complicated by the added complexity of comparing codes, which may not substantially, democratically, or currently represent nations.

Thus the cross-national comparison of media Codes of Ethics is not unlike comparing different cells within different systemic (nervous, circulatory, muscular, etc.) and biological (phylum, genus, species, etc.) contexts in which the cells are located. Comparison and conclusions must be carefully qualified.

Nevertheless, to imagine that nothing would be learned from a comparison of national and sub-national codes, seems erroneous. If the points listed above are kept in mind, meaningful patterns may emerge which can conceivably be interpreted with some measure of understanding.

Given the larger cross-national question being asked, however, it seems imperative that all such research be examined and interpreted by scholars in other nations to determine what patterns of interpretation, if any, are likewise "universal". This chapter is written by a U.S. scholar and may be usefully counterbalanced by other scholars worldwide. However, once again, representativeness is complex. All scholars do not necessarily represent national or even scholarly viewpoints.

UNDERSTANDING CODES

There is no uniform code for the writing of codes: their subject, parameters, style, specificity, legitimacy, credibility, accessibility, and implementation greatly vary. Thus codes are no more to be stereotyped than nations and peoples. Three means for better understanding communication ethics codes include: 1) study of their socio-historical context; 2) study of their place within the field of international communication; and 3) concrete analysis of types and structures of codes.

CODE HISTORY

-To give a history of media ethics codes is to make specific decisions about what a code of media ethics is (and is not), where the borderlines surrounding media-specific codes lie, and how broadly the word "media" is to be defined (e.g., are writing and speech included?). Nevertheless, while debate has not resolved these points, the preliminary work of Lars Bruun may give the best skeletal overview of code development.[26] Bruun places the origination point for written codes at 1900 in Sweden, but notes an earlier statute of 1896 within the Austrian section of the Polish Journalistic Association.[27] However, since the Swedish code

was not widely accepted and since statutes are not codes, Bruun calls the "Charter of Conduct," adopted by the Syndicat National des Journalistes in France (1918) the first adopted code.[28] The first call for an international "code of ethics and standards of practice" did not come until 1921 when the American Newspaperman James Brown delivered a paper to the Second International Press Conference in Honolulu.[29] While Bruun further traces the advent of codes in numerous countries and international associations, it is more important for our purposes to note that in the past sixty-five years hundreds of codes have been written and accepted but no successful global code, representative of all countries, has been adopted.

The historical context for codes is much larger than chronology and geography. Specific codes may be the outcome of many larger historical forces--political, economic, socio-psychological, and others listed below. It is essential that no code be studied divorced from social history and people, as if an independent object. Some of the historical forces which, through an interplay of influences, create the content, style, and process of code development are listed below.

#5 1. Legal: Hammurabi's Code is also called Hammurabi's Law, depending upon translation and national audience. Codes of Ethics frequently show strong legal influence; conversely, as Kittross notes, "laws are often formalized ethical mores."30

2. Economic: Shifting economic conditions may catalyze movements which protect or threaten media institutions. Economic conditions may determine who may employ and select with sufficient time to formulate and publish codes. The length and availability of codes may be influenced by publication costs. Economic powers may call for codes which protect special interests. Codes may be influenced by hiring, firing, salary, and other employment conditions which are subject to economic forces.

3. Political: Codes reflect the process by which decisions are made: how they are written and how writers are selected is political. Language modification, recommended practices and penalties, self-discipline vs. external discipline procedures may all reflect gentle lobbying or absolute authority.

4. Social: Socializing influences upon the construction of a code might include societal norms, taboos, customs, and role structures. Peer group influence, whether within, or beyond, the group responsible for drafting a code, may be considerable. Divided societies (cf. institutions, regions, etc.) may produce "compromise codes."

5. Religious: A code may be overtly religious, or may be the secular equivalent of transplanted religious values. Codes also reflect reaction to religious values or attempted actions (e.g., censorship, ownership, etc.) by organized religion. Although frequently hidden, religous values, by virtue of their close proximity to, and in some cases identification with, moral philosophy (cf. ethics), often permeate the subtext of media codes.

6. Cultural/ethnic: Although specific distinctions should be regarded between definitions of "cultural", "societal", and "ethnic", within differing heritages exist distinctive attitudes toward space, time, proximity and etiquette. Such may be reflected in code precepts about, for example, invasion of privacy and protection of the confidentiality of news sources.

7. Psychological: Depending upon its use within society, a code may be viewed as a rationalizing mechanism, defense mechanism, aspirational/inspirational motivator, self-inhibiting control (cf. super-ego), or other socio-psychological actor. Codes reflect the thought, and thus cognitive function, of an individual or group.

8. Anthropoligical: From a larger perspective, the code itself is peculiar to the human species. Attempts to regulate or guide collective patterns of discourse, through language usually confined to paper, is a unique activity among humans. Like talking to one's self, tying a string around one's fingers, making New Year's resolutions, etc., creating codes is a type of self-communication, at the group level, which reminds the group of preferred behavior. Within different tribes and cultures, the degree to which self-reminders, internal agreements and moral "codes", are binding or respected varies considerably. So, too, does the degree to which rigidity vs. flexibility of social structure invites or resists internal change.

9. Archetypal: To some degree Codes of Ethics have become in some settings more symbolic than regulatory. To this extent they become more generic than specific and the authors of codes, in some instances, may consciously or subconsciously aspire toward a perfect (cf. archetypal) code, one which is eternal in essence and universal in sentiment. Those who draft codes are often influenced by the style and form of previous codes. They are aware that others will judge the style and form, not just the content, of their own draft.

10. Linguistic: As translators point out, thought is rendered different by each language. Some ideas are difficult, and others impossible, to express in particular linguistic patterns. The meaning of a code rests not only in the ideas, but in the language of the code, and in the interpretation and translation of that language.

11. Environmental: Whether a culture is indoor or outdoor; whether a nation is tropical or frigid, mountainous or below sea level, has impact upon the nature of communication and the values toward particular modes of communication held by the people within it.

12. National: Is there a strong or weak national identity? Are all, some, or no mass media nationalized? Is the population nationalistic? Is the public consciousness closer to a national superiority or inferiority complex in relation to other nations? Attitudes toward these questions influence guidelines toward media behavior <u>nationally</u> and <u>internationally</u>.

13. Emotional/personal: Whatever the larger social factors influencing the drafting of codes outlined above, ultimately it is people emotionally committed to personal ideals, collective beliefs, or a mixture of the two who put words on paper. Each person may be motivated by different emotions (fear of ostracism, fear of demotion, jealousy of another, passion for justice, frustration with committee process and many others), or the entire group may be collectively motivated by a longing for approval, despair over the time and bureaucracy necessary to draft a simple code, creative excitement over the "collaborative chemistry" in the group, etc.

14. Global/transcendent: Historians who believe in global "movements", historical "waves" and social "tides" may suggest that all preceding categories are the product of larger forces (cf. tides) which transcend yet influence all human affairs. Seen in this light, the wave of high technology, the advent of global Communism, and the birth/demise of industrialization have all been hidden players in the shaping of international communication. These "waves" may in turn be seen as currents within larger tides--class struggle, Divine design, or planetary shift, etc.--which constantly shape social forms and functions.

Whatever the relative presence and interplay of these factors, codes of Ethics, and all communication practices, partake of an enormous panoply of surrounding conditions which influence their birth and life cycle. Any attempt to compare their contents has little value without an understanding of the vast and ever-changing galaxy from which they have been extracted.

CODES TYPES AND STRUCTURES

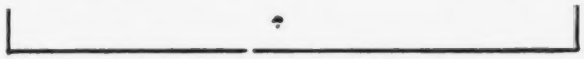
Given the precautions above, specific analysis of codes is possible. Jones has given preliminary suggestions about some types of codes. For example, he distinguishes mandatory from voluntary codes and those formulated "from internal agreement" from those "externally imposed."[31] He also attempts two four-part categories to simplify: 1) the complexity of a code's content, and 2) our understanding of whom the code is designed to serve.[32] This research adapts not only these four ideas, but adds six other simple diagrams, which may help in the classification of an increasingly dense and complicated universe of media Codes.

Beginning with the most simple codes it is possible to show that they may be placed within a spectrum of emphasis. There is no attempt to give precise scaling to these spectra, which are illustrative, not objective tools of

measurement. While other such spectra may be included, here are eight of the most important polarities by which to locate the parameter of the vast majority of codes:

1. Individual — Social

2. Minimal Standards — Ideal Standards



3. Inhibitive — Inspirational

4. Mandatory — Voluntary

5. Internal Agreement — External Imposition

6. Medium (technology, institutions, personnel) — Message (data, programming, products)

7. Informal (casual, guidelines) — Formal (legal, binding)

8. Material (exact conditions) — Metaphysical (vague ideals)

While most of these categories seem intuitively clear, it should be noted that they are merely helpful, not comprehensive, and not entirely free from ambiguity and overlap. Spectra #3, #4, and #5, for example, while they do not rename each other, are closely related. Some codes may regulate both the medium (technology, institutions, and personnel) and the message (data, programming, products) of a major communications industry (see #6); although most are likely to be weighted toward one end of the spectrum. It is difficult to find an exact boundary between "formal" and "informal" or other polarities employed. Nevertheless, approximate charting of a Code along such simple spectra is helpful comparatively and gives an introductory profile to the code's parameters.

Two more specific diagrams include a second dimension of analysis simultaneously, which allow visualizatin of the code's parameters and "population". Every code influences some subset of the universe of communicated information. Diagram #9 illustrates two subdivisions of that data: 1) medium (does a code pertain to print or braodcasting? satellites or computers?) and 2) content (does a code restrict news or editorial content? advertising or entertainment policy?). Diagram #10 demonstrates that each

code influences specific people as well. A code's "population" has two dimensions: 1) the people communicating, whether those owning/supervising or those "employed", and 2) those people monitoring and receiving the communication (the code's audience), whether a general or specific public on the one hand, or a more hidden audience, such as a censorship or regulatory board on the other. With the advent of more interactive technology, the line of demarcation between "communicator" and "public" is no longer clear.

Diagram 9: CODE PARAMETERS

CONTENT REGULATED

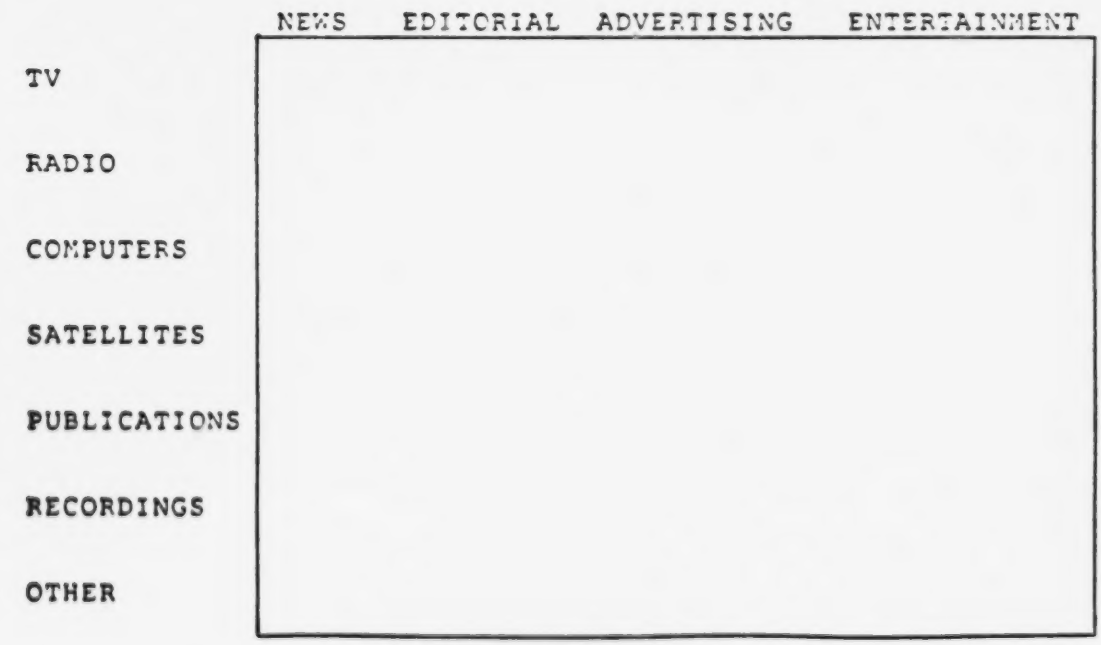
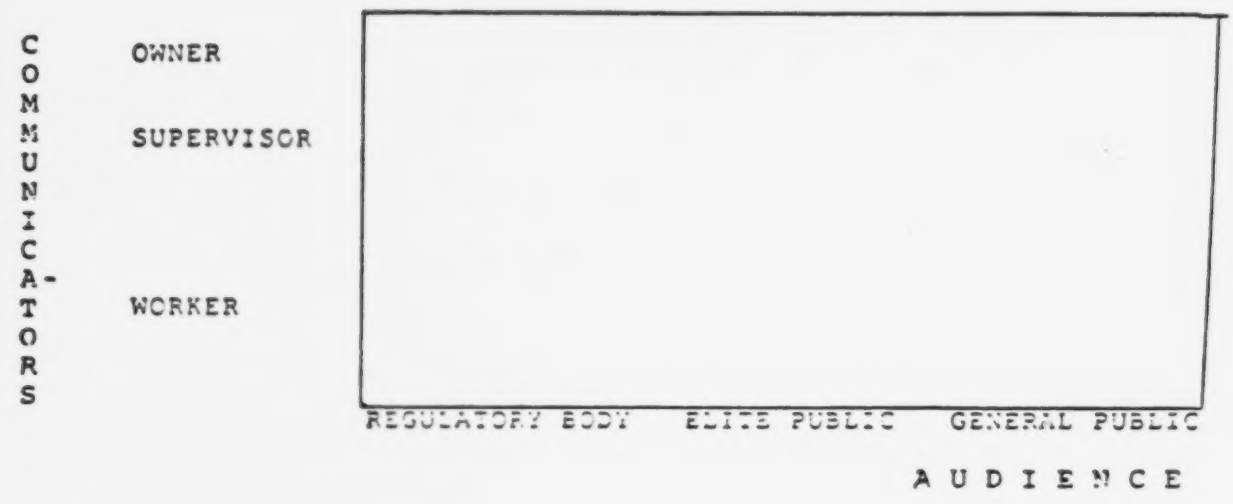


DIAGRAM 10: CODE POPULATION

AUDIENCE CONCERNED (VISIBLE OR HIDDEN)

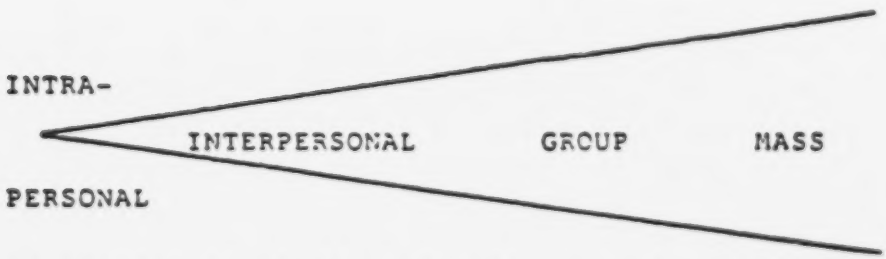


Once again, not all categories are uniformly applicable to all countries and regions. In different Socialist and Communist countries, the owners may be, either theoretically or in reality, the workers. It is much more difficult in some countries than in others to separate news from entertainment. Some codes do not specify which media or content they intend to govern, guide, or uplift. Moreover, the intended audience, both for programming and the products, is usually mixed. The content is sculpted with the regulatory (cf. censorship) body in mind, and so too, might the code be; but in many countries will not the taste and proven media habits of the audience also influence the shaping of much programming, and the writing of some codes?

Whatever the areas of overlap, shades of gray, and "fuzzy" codes of vague parameters, diagrams and spectra of this nature provide needed distinctions in sorting increasing numbers of documents entitled, alternatively "Code of Media Ethics," "Statement of Principles Among Journalists," "Information Policy Guidelines," etc. Such codes should be neither confused nor confusing.

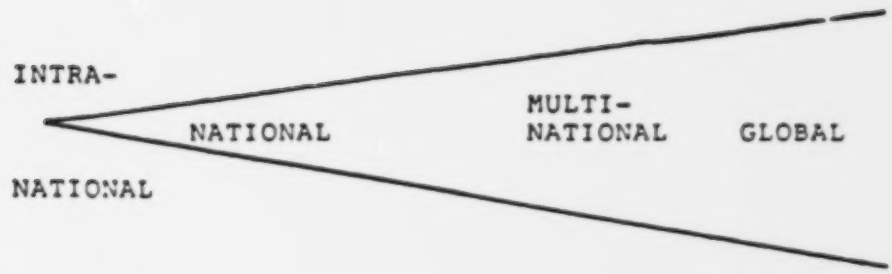
For the subject of this chapter, one particularly needed mapping device is an instrument which will determine the geographical implications of a code. Does the code apply within a nation (intra-national), to an entire nation (national), to two or more nations (international), to a group of nations (multinational) as within UNESCO, the United Nations, etc., or to all nations (global)? A useful model to adapt in this situation is "the V-Shaped Continuum" by Gerhart Weibe, as in Fundamentals of Social Psychology.[33]

DIAGRAM 11: COMMUNICATION PROCESS
(V-SHAPED CONTINUUM BY G. D. WEIBE)



The adaptation is simple. In this case four types of codes are selected.

DIAGRAM 12: CODE BOUNDARIES



The word "international" is deliberately avoided in these categories to avoid confusion; in English "international" can mean either between or among nations and consequently would not distinguish codes designed for all countries from those pertaining to two countries or a group of nations. "Global" codes, conversely, describe only those codes intended to include all nations and "multinational" codes describes codes for groupings of nations, from two to G - 1 (Where G is the number of countries currently existing in the world. G - 1 would be that number minus one.).

Once again, no system of categories is perfect. Some national codes include statements about communication policy with other countries. Some media organizations which are intra-national (pertaining to some portion, territory, province, etc. within a nation) have members in other countries. "Global" codes are not drafted by representatives of every nation or even in many cases by

delegates who know how many nations currently exist. Nevertheless, all of the categories above will allow finer discrimination within the previous amorphous discussion of codes of media ethics.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION CONTEXT

Just as Codes are classified and categorized, so too, are countries. While dividing the world into fragments may lead to dangerous stereotypes about the countries within the stereotype (cf. the West, the Soviet bloc, the unaligned countries, etc.), international communication realities are shaped by alliances between and among countries. When Claude-Jean Bertrand notes that the "West" is more concerned with ethical issues involving "freedom" and the "Third World" more interested in issues regarding "justice", a helpful observation is imparted.[34]

Codes may be unique to nations but some codes reflect deep ideological stances which are associated with groups of countries. Altschull, for example, uses the loose categories "Market", "Marxist", and "Advancing" in describing underlying "Articles of Faith" for the three groups of countries. In this case he is describing "the press," but many of the principles would also apply to other forms of communication.[35]

ARTICLES OF FAITH

(Altschull)

Market	Marxist	Advancing
The press is free of outside interference.	The press transforms false consciousness and educates workers into class consciousness.	The press is a unifying and not divisive force.
The press serves the public's right to know.	The press provides for the objective needs of the people.	The press is a device for beneficial social change.
The press seeks to learn and present the truth.	The press facilitates effective change.	The press is an instrument of social justice.
The press reports fairly and objectively.	The press reports objectively about the realities of experience.	The press is meant to be used for two-way exchange between journalists and readers.

To the extent such generalizations are accurate (and no generalizations are ever entirely accurate), nations, like codes, have patterns of agreement (cf. alliance), which frequently allow codes to be more easily understood and, in some cases, more easily grouped. Categories are debatable, however. Merrill presents a map in which the world is divided into "the West", "the South" and "Developing".[36] Head indirectly invites a different type of categorization, according to the broadcasting model used by that country (e.g., French, British, etc.).[37] National patterns of

communication may be categorized in any number of ways, as illustrated in Comparative Mass Media Systems (Martin and Chaudhary, New York: Longman, 1983), as, for example in Osmo A. Wiio's elaborate models of "open" and "closed" mass media systems.[38]

Such categories are useful only to the extent they represent real, not simply conceptual/imaginary, patterns. It is possible that some codes will fall into categories along the same fault lines by which nations are aligned and divided. But alliances are not always permanent, nor deep, and there are many nations which have changed partners and systems, perhaps several times, no matter what the system of categories, since the first codes were approved. Nor is there reason to belive that such change will not continue.

Summarily, there are numerous contexts and methodological devices (spectra, diagrams, etc.) by which types of codes may be sorted. There is also an elaborate social network from which codes are born and evolve. Moreover, there is a growing literature which attempts to categorize their "parents"--nations and media systems--and the clans (political, economic, etc.) to which those parents belong. However, while codes and media systems are divided at the chemical level (cf. salt, sand, and sugar), they are united at two other levels. It is at the surface level, and also paradoxically at the most substantial level, where universals dwell.

CULTURAL UNIVERSALS

Previously, three strong contenders for media ethics "universals" were presented. These are "the quest for truth," "desire for responsibility," and a "call for free expression." By now it is clear that these cannot be proven to be "pure universals;" that is, the entire human population cannot be meaningfully and consistently surveyed.

Nor is there an attempt to claim that these are "cultural" universals. Using the important Kroeber and Kluckhohn (Culture, 1952) definition of "culture", it is possible to determine that "nations" and "cultures", although they may significantly overlap, are distinctive.[39] Nations, for example, are officially constituted, and have official governing organs, and may include several cultures. National representative universals are more specifically identified since cultures do not always have conscious parameters (nations have borders and written identities), clear-cut citizenry, nor use mass communication.

Many codes discussed below represent specific professional organizations or institutions within a nation and thus may be perceived as national or, as with the Canadian Association of French Language Journalists, "intra-national". One should never rule out, however, that a code may also, to some degree, represent one or many cultures.

THREE CONTENDERS

Within a framework of such qualification, the available evidence suggests that, within the universe of intra-national, national, multinational and global codes available for comparative research, at least three principles emerge as leading contenders for consensus. In his seven "Laws of Journalism," Altschull mentions, in reference to press rationale, two of these themes: 1) "all press systems endorse the doctrine of social responsibility;"[40] 2) under his comparative "Purposes of Journalism," he places "truth" at the top of his three lists (Market: To seek truth; Marxist: To search for truth; Advancing: To serve truth).[41] Albert Camus, upon accepting the Nobel Prize in 1957, more indirectly alluded to two of these themes:

> the nobility of our calling will always be rooted in two commitments difficult to observe: refusal to lie about what we know, and resistance to oppression.42

These remarks, however accurate, are only aspects of a larger reality. Quantitative evidence, is more readily obtained through the combined studies of H. Leppanen (Journalistien Kansaliset ja Konsainvaliset Saannostot, 1977), C. Jones, (Mass Media Codes of Ethics and Councils, 1980), and Nordenstreng, Hannikainen, and Alanen (Alanen research thesis, U. of Tampere, 1979).

Although he does not mention the exact number of codes he has examined, Clement Jones describes codes from fifty countries, which he discusses within geographical areas: Europe--twenty-four countries; North and South America--seven countries; and Africa and Arab States--five countries. He is careful to discuss national and intra-national codes country by country and keep them separate from international (whether multi-national or global) codes. Virtually all of the codes assembled mention Journalism or Press in their title or within the title of the sponsoring organization. Exceptions, such as Tanzania, for example, suggest that the scope of media and content covered may extend beyond journalism.[44]

Harry Leppanan focussed his study upon journalistic codes and enumerates fifty-nine. These include multi-national codes such as The International Federation of Journalists' 1954 Declaration of Principles and The Draft International Code of Ethics adopted by The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1952. The larger number of national and intra-national codes predates 1978. While Leppanan's research might be challenged by some scholars for being a Master's thesis, it is made the centerpiece of Bruun's comparative research, and indeed his only empirical data within the published review of codes.

There is admitted overlap between the codes studied by Jones; Leppanan and Bruun; and Nordensterng, Hannikainen, and Alanen. For example, The International Federation of Journalists' Declaration of 1954 listed above is used by both Bruun and Nordenstreng.[45] Nordenstreng et al, however, use fifty codes (cf. Leppanan, fifty-nine codes; Jones, fifty countries), forty-two (possibly forty-four, depending upon category scheme) of which they list by country and the others by multi-national association.[46] Seven countries are represented by two codes. Nordenstreng et al are further interested in comparing the codes with forty-four other "international instruments" (twelve treaties, fourteen declarations, and eighteen resolutions) which contain direct or indirect reference to the mass media.[47]

Since the comparison between international standards (documents) with professional manifestations of ethics (codes) influenced their categorization, Nordenstreng et al's seven categories are considerably different from Bruun's eighteen. Jones, rather than use subject headings for categories, lists 5 "factors of difference" among the codes, followed by "five elements commonly to be found in most codses."[48] Thus, each comparative scheme is significantly different.

Despite the differing methodologies, types of codes, purpose of the research, and depth of scholarship, a comparison of the studies reveals interesting overlap. In survey I (Leppanen), the "theme which is represented more

than any other topic is the theme of honest and true dissemination of news," which appears in fifty-three of the fifty-nine codes.[49] In survey II (Nordenstreng et al) the theme mentioned most is "objectivity, veracity, honesty," which appears in forty-nine out of fifty codes.[50] Jones, who does not quantify his findings, leads his five "elements which are commonly to be found" with "the emphasis upon the integrity, truth and objectivity of all forms of news collection and dissemination."[51]

Thus, in survey I, approximately 90% of all codes, in survey II, 98% of all codes, and in survey III, a very high, if not the highest percentage (figures not given) of all codes, focus upon the general theme of "truth, truthfulness, objectivity, honesty, accuracy, etc." Further research might well reveal that a high percentage of these codes also place the theme of truthfulness as the most important one within journalism, if not within communication.

There can be no pretense that any or all of these codes directly and literally mention "the quest for truth." As Bruun indicates, the National Association of Hungarian Journalists may call more for "verification" and accuracy "in conformity with reality" while the Japanese Nihon Shinbun Kyodai's Code calls for news reporting to "convey facts accurately and faithfully."[52] The Code of Ethics adopted by the U.S. Society of Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, and also adopted by the Journalists' Association in

Columbia, "believes the duty of the journalist is to serve the truth...Truth is our ultimate goal."[53] Thus codes categorized together may vary considerably in language, emphasis, and in the aspects of truthfulness articulated. The "quest for truth" is simply a collective superobjective.

Truth itself, however translated, cannot be said to have monolithic objective (and this word is used paradoxically) meaning. Merrill and Odell, for example, list five levels of truth--"transcendental, potential, selected, reported, perceived." Moreover, there are numerous philosphical, and other texts, which question the existence, meanings, and levels of "truth", "objectivity", "accuracy", "verification", etc.[54] What can be said is that based upon available representative research, "the longing for the communication of truth," particularly by journalists, but also by social communicators in toto, tends most toward conscious global universality. It has already been carefully demonstrated that social contexts, linguistic factors, and many other considerations provide many levels of interpretation to the notions of truth and truthfulness.

In one sense it is extremely difficult to distinguish "the desire for responsibility among social communicators" from most other categories. Tautologically, one of the primary responsibilities of journalists particularly (in many countries, entertainer are offered forms of "poetic license") is to be truthful; a journalist who is

deliberately deceptive to both his public and his "employers" is considered irresponsible. Moreover, since for many codes, "responsible" is equated with, or closely related to, "professional", and since many codes seek to define professional behavior, a second tautology appears--to disobey a professional code is thus, by definition, to behave irresponsibly. At one level then many codes define "responsibility", or at least ethical responsibility.

That the word and notion "responsibility" is a key concept cannot be easily refuted. Hans Jonas's entire book The Imperative of Responsibility (U. of Chicago, 1979) is written in response to the question "Why is responsibility brought to the fore as the key principle of the twentieth century?" Last year 52 groups of media professionals and enthusiasts in 19 countries affirmed the central significance of "responsibility" to communication in a 90 minute teleconference.[56] "The Responsibilities of Journalism" conference at Notre Dame University in Indiana in 1982 spawned Robert Schmuhl's useful book by that name (Notre Dame Press, 1984). These are only a few important examples from calculations.

A major discussion area within codes might be called "responsibility to...." For example, Jones' third representative universal candidate, "professionalism", reflects responsibility to the profession, while his "commonly found elements" #4 mentions responsibility (cf. loyalty) to one's country, which, in turn, is closely

related to the notion of social responsibility (cf. responsibility to society). About half of the categories advanced by Bruun relate directly to the theme of social responsibility--professional secrecy (forty-two codes), following the objectives of mass communication (forty-two codes), respecting right to privacy (thrity-nine codes), not accepting personal benefits (thirty-seven codes), avoiding plagiarism and slander (thirty-three codes), and many others.

Nordenstreng et al provide a system of categories in which global responsibility is measured (responsibility to international law or global requirements). By this larger definition of social responsibility (toward the maintenance of global peace and security, for example), 28% mention the communicator's responsibility toward the maintenance or establishment of peace and security; 24% are concerned with the responsibility for friendship and cooperation among nations, and 36% are concerned with racial equality and discrimination. The majority of codes do not reach to such international scope and many codes may represent journalists who do not sense that the responsibilities listed above are specific to journalists, or mass media.

It is significant to note, however, that, as previously stated, the notion of the responsibility to the truth or truthfulness is held in 98% of all codes. "Other obligations" (cf. responsibilities) are mentioned in 94% of

all codes. The notion of social responsibility is inherent within the Nordenstreng schema, and thus does not appear as an offical category.

The important overall unifying ingredient of virtually all codes is the expectation that the communicator be accountable or responsible to, if not for, people other than him/herself. Such people are described in differing orders of magnitude--"employers", fellow workers, all professionals, all members of the institution, etc. There is the implicit or explicit expectation that such people, or the ideals which serve such people (justice, fairness, truth, equality, etc.) will be acknowledged through behavior. Such behavior is "socially responsible." Depending upon how this "social responsibility" is defined, roughly 85%-100% of the codes examined in all three surveys call for or assume social responsibility.

"Freedom of expression" has many interpretations and contexts. For example, the Hungarian code previously cited mentions "In the spirit of the Freedom of the Press as laid down in the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic;" the Norewegian Code "Journalist, Be Careful" says:

> A free press has an important function in our society by disseminating information, debate and social criticism.57

Bruun and Leppanen, from whom these codes are quoted, note thirty-three citings of "freedom of information" in fifty-nine codes (56%), which is a lower ratio than Nordenstreng et al listings under "Free Flow of Information," which includes thirty-four codes (68%). It should be noted that "free flow of information" has specific meanings, literature, and ongoing debate about its interpretation and implementation. Jones uses this phrase within his second "elements commonly to be found" and defines the flow as "from governments to those whom they govern, and from those who are governed to governors."[58]

Jones's listing to the contrary, the 56% and 68% listings of the other two surveys does not prove universal status. However, because "freedom of the press," "freedom of speech," and simliar phrases are already specified in most national constitutions, and since the responsibility for maintaing that freedom is often given to governments or courts, the notion is often inferred "between the lines" of a code. Thus the third candidate for universal status, "call for freedom of expression" must, on the basis of this research, maintain bordeline status. Such a "universal" can only be inferred.

Moreover, "freedom" has vastly different implications in different codes. A common interpretation of Marxian usage of the term "freedom of the press" emphasizes the freedom of the poor, enslaved, or otherwise oppressed to publish and

broadcast, not just those who can afford (cf. control) media institutions and technology. In many more "libertarian" type codes, "freedom" has the emphasis of freedom from government control of interference. Thus, at one level, this is a "surface" representative universal, fixed by language, if not rhetoric. However, "the call for free expression" may in fact be indigenous to human beings, and thus transcendent of its many interpretations. At some level communication ethics focuses upon the concern that organisms (whether individuals, institutions, governments, classes, minorities, and the media they use) should not be muzzled. However, there is not widespread agreement about whose voices should be heard, to what extent, and through which media.

Beyond these three areas, one of which is called borderline, are many overlapping content areas among codes. For example, Bruun and Leppanen note that all Nordic codes stipulate a need for clarity between news and comment (cf. editorial) and call for headlines which are truly warranted.[59] There are dozens of similar areas relating more to specific responsibilities, to the implementation and adoption of codes themselves, and to the gray zones between and among representative universals.

Such gray zones include areas of tension between a professional's responsibility to tell the truth and to protect the security of (cf. be responsible to) the nation.

For example, the Code of Press Ethics in Burma states "nothing shall be published that will endanger the security, stability, and sovereignty of the Union." According to universal #1, the extent of truth-telling may be restricted by this mandate. Moreover, within universal #3, the "freedom" of the journalist or media (but not the freedom of the nation or its people in aggregate) is potentially restricted (cf. censored) by such wording. There is nothing novel about this tension between universals, which reflects the ancient debates about responsibility vs. freedom, truth vs. necessity, or in more modern literature, the problems posed within the Journal of Mass Media Ethics (issue #1, winter 1985, see Christians, Barney and Black) and Bok's Lying (New York, Random House, 1979).[61]

Like larger philosophical and political systems, codes may call for freedom, responsibility, and truth, but not examine the consequent contradictory implications. Some codes do account for potential contradictions within their principles and wording; most ignore larger political, philosophical, and linguistic contexts in which contradiction occurs.

Codes within a single country or even within different professional branches of a single media industry may be contradictory, differ in emphasis, or even differ in direction as to the ethical behavior of communicators or the moral purpose of communication. Universal essences are

chamelion-like in complexion and may adopt the language and social context of their environment.

SUMMARY

Given these distinctions, essences pervade codes which, as of 1985, represented numerous intra-national and national, but fewer multinational and global codes. The most dominant essence is the quest for truthfulness, if not truth. Empirically, the theme of truth and truthfulness is most pervasive. The second most dominant theme, that of responsibility, particularly social responsibility, and its subthemes--professionalism, loyalty, and accountability--is inherent within a vast majority (85%-100%) of codes. It is specified within almost as many. The theme of "freedom of expression,"--and the subthemes "free flow of information," "freedom of press," etc.-- are articulated less frequently than "truth" or "responsibility", and empirically is a "borderline" representative universal. However, the contexts of codes, the constitutions of nations, and the subtexts within codes, point toward the universality of concern with "freedom".

These three "ideals" have been carefully entitled candidates for the status of conscious representative universal. "Candidates" is a necessary qualification

because three studies and less than one hundred codes are not globally universal. It is possible that the methodologies, translations, and materials within any (or all) of the three studies conceal more than they reveal. It is also evident that the three themes isolated within this essay could be recategorized, subcategorized, or renamed in a variety of manners. However, this simple rank-ordering of theme frequency may give evidence of what could be discovered in larger, more current studies of consistent methodology. It may, with the necessary leap of faith, point toward thoughts and feelings within the minds and hearts of human beings wordlwide.

As stated previously, the attempt to prove the nature of subconscious universals is more challenging, if not impossible. Like the impact of Heisenberg's instruments, the current impact of the human subconscious, (including the subconscious minds of this researcher and those reading this manuscript) upon research itself is unknown. Thus when compiling conscious surveys, we may deductively hypothesize that codes, to the extent they are representative and meaningful, point toward the relative dominance of three themes. However, it is admittedly an act of faith, one which may be reasoned, but which is nevertheless a "leap", to assume that these three tendencies may well represent subconscious universals.

THE DANGERS AND VALUES OF UNIVERSALS

The study of universals, in any field, can lead to gross oversimplifications and meaningless generalizations. It would be dangerous for the previously developed research to be reduced to "All people want all media to be 100% truthful, fully responsible, and absolutely free." Clearly some people want some media to be 1) regulated, if not precisely controlled, 2) responsible to some people, but not to others, and 3) free to express only approved attitudes. Even if all people did espouse this stated triple ideal, are all people honest? Sane? Open?

Moreover, we have noted that surface universals are misleading. Many cultures make "family" central to social life, but what is "family"? Patriarchy in one culture; matriarchy in another; extended family in a third culture; nuclear family in another; and tribal family in a fifth. Linguistic or rhetorical universals may be merely nominal, if not misleading: the meaning of the love of "freedom" may vary as widely as the meaning of love of family.

Similarly, we have noted that overarching conscious universals--agreed upon verities among nations and professions--are ephemeral and wrought by momentary compromise, like peace treaties and arms agreements. Some have far more potential, consensus, and representative value than others, but few, if any, will withstand the ebb and

flow of international political, technological, economic, and social change.

However, if universals are understood as "essences", not literal absolutes, nor concrete objects, they may inform us of subconscious connections at deeper levels. Overarching universals are like bridges which attempt to connect a widespread sea of islands. Such islands, however, are already connected at deeper levels, as would be revealed if the sea were drained of its water. Within this analogy surface universals may be more profound than is often imagined, as they may reflect, in some diminished and isolated way, the nature of what is underneath, and indeed what is connected to other islands of humanity.

To the extent this analogy holds true within the field of media ethics, universals are valuable. At a time when global superpowers have the power to eliminate humanity, there may be far more value in the building of bridges than the maintenance of stereotypes. Those within mass communication are not exempt from the choice between finding common ground between peoples and maximizing differences which alienate and further divide.

To the extent they are wisely understood, universals may help to develop an openness among those with polarized points of view. Expert negotiators always begin with <u>common</u> ground between people(s) before seeking to reconcile differences. One of the best ways to understand "the

other" (in Buber's terms) is to first find that element present within him/her which is present within one's self.

The discovery of universal feelings, truths, and perceptions which are already present increases one's tolerance and may broaden one's understanding of multi-faceted notions, such as truth, responsibility, and freedom. From this learning comes, at both the personal and (inter-) national level, more meaningful relationships which in turn increase respect, empathy, and openness.

From this process can come a parade of other benefits: cooperative projects and aspirations; improved communication skills at the (inter-) national level, better cross-national/cross-cultural exchange; the increase of knowledge and hopefully wisdom; and other steps contributing toward world peace. Acknowledging common purpose, aspirations, feelings, and ideals may contribute to the process by which personal and national defenses begin to thaw.

It is possible to posit that ethics itself, when in search of common ground, can be a meaningful universal. As Nordenstreng and Alanen have noted:

> the question whether ethics is an inherent aspect of human communication seems by now almost obsolete. How could we deny that values and, thus, questions of ethics, are essential to the phenomena of human communication, which is a fundamental element in social relations. Ethics should indeed be understood as a pervasive (emphasis added) aspect of communication.62

The increasing discussion of media ethics and shared values, where minds and hands are open, can lead to a greater cooperation among media professionals worldwide.

However, the ultimate ideal in this regard would not be the perfectly acceptable international code. The pure ideal would be a world in which codes are unnecessary. Realistically, however, there are many challenges and changes facing both scholars and communicators. There is a current global flood of technologies, terrorism, international tension, and telecommunicated tragedy. The cooperative possibilities and ethical challenges created by new technologies and world conditions, pose questions which will take increasing research by scholars in many countries to correctly frame and answer.

ENDNOTES

1. Spartak Beglov, "Journalists' Responsibility for the Destiny of Peace," in Professional Codes in Journalism, Bruun, Lars, ed. (Prague: International Organization of Journalists, 1979), p. 57.

2. See, for example, Ghyka, Matila, The Geometry of Art and Life (New York: Dover, 1977); Kirk and Radon, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); Blair, Lawrence, Rhythms of Vision (New York, Shocken Books, 1975); and Mandelbrot, Benoit, Fractals, Form, Chance, and Dimension (San Francisco: Freeman and Co., 1977).

3. David Little, "Calvin and the Prospects for...Natural Law," in Norm and Context... by Outka, Gene, and Ramsey, Paul (New York: Scribner's, 1978), p. 186.

4. Philip Selznick, "Natural Law and Sociology," in Natural Law and Modern Society, by Cogney, John, et al (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963); Linton, Ralph, "Universal Ethical Principles: An Anthropological view," in Moral Principles in Action, Anshen, R.N., ed. (New york: Harper & rowe, 1953); Mead, Margaret, Continuities in Cultural Evaluation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); Brandt, Richard B., Ethical Theory (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1959).

5. One of McLuhan's unfinished manuscripts was entitled The Laws of Media. It is difficult to know where to begin reading with American models of communication, although any number of basic textbooks in Mass Communication offer a compendium of early models. See, for example, Mass Media IV, by Heibert, Ungurait, and Bohn (New York: Longman, 1985), pp. 19-25; Critical theory, structural, hermeneutics each have spawned an expanding literature. Some of the most important authors include Jurgens Habermas, Walter Benjamin, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Hans Godamer.

6. Hans Jonas, The Imperative of Responsibility (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 75.

7. UNESCO Document SS-77 conf./603.17 (Paris: UNESCO, June 13, 1977), p. 1, Meeting of Experts on Contribution to an Ethic of Communication, Ottawa, Canada, May 31-June 3, 1977.

8. John T. Powell, "Broadcast Advertising of Medical Products and Services: Its Regulations by Other Nations," in Federal Communication Bar Journal, XXV, No. 2, 1972.

9. Ibid., p. 176.

10. Australia, Barbados, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Northern Nigeria, Singapore, Southern Yemen, Trinidad, and Tobago.

11. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Alenen, Antte, "Journalism Ethics and International Relations," in Communication, Vol. p. 233.

12. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Hannikainem, Lauri, The Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, 1984).

13. Kaarle Nordenstreng, Presidium de L'IOJ (Prague: International Organization of Journalists, 1978), p. 15.

14. See Appendix 16 (Western Alternative), pp. 391-5; Appendix 17 (Socialist Alternative), pp. 396-398; and Appendix 18 (Non-Aligned Alternative), pp. 399-403, in The Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO, by Nordenstreng and Alenen.

15. Nordenstreng and Hannikainen, Declaration, p. 238.

16. Clifford Christians, "Ethics Abroad," in Journalism Ethics Report (Society of Professional Journalists, 1981), p. 16.

17. Cees Hamelink, "Toward an International Code of Ethics," in Professional Codes in Journalism, Lars Bruun, ed., p. 75.

18. See, for example, Immanuel Velikovsky, Mankind In Amnesia, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1981); Mircea Eleade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1980); Richard Heinberg, Memories and Visions of Paradise (Cleveland: EDL, Inc., 1985).

19. Clement Jones, Mass Media Codes of Ethics and Councils, p. 9.

20. John Merrill and Odell, S. Jack , Philosophy and Journalism, p. 137.

21. Jones, Codes, p. 16. Jones writes, "Running throughout practically all the Codes of Ethics examined, and the functioning of bodies like Media Councils whose work has been studied in detail, there is a strong thread of self-interest and of self-preservation."

22. Ralph Barney and Jay Black, "The Case Against Mass Media Codes of Ethics," in The Journal of Mass Media, Vol. I, No. 1, Fall/Winter, 1985-6, pp. 27-36.

23. Klaus Krippendorff, "On the Ethics of Constructing Communication," Presidential Address, International Communication Association, Honolulu, May 26, 1985. Quoted as printed in "An Extended Abstract."

24. Leonard Doob, Preface, Cross-Cultural Research Methods, by Brislin, Lonner, and Thorndike, p. vii.

25. Jones, Codes, p. 16.

26. Lars Bruun, "The History of Written Codes of Ethics--A Chronology of Events," in Professional Codes of Journalism, pp. 17-26.

27. Ibid., p. 17.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 18.

30. Michael J. Kittross, in classroom lecture at Emerson College Library, Boston, Massachusetts, Nov. 20, 1985.

31. Jones, Codes, pp. 14-15.

32. Ibid.

33. Gerhart D. Weibe, as printed in Fundamentals of Social Psychology, by Hartley, Eugene L. and Ruth E., p. 79.

34. Claude-Jean Bertrand, "Ethics in International Communication," in Intermdedia, p. 9.

35. J. Herbert Altschull, Agents of Power, p. 26.

36. John Merrill, Global Journalism, p. 53.

37. Sydney Head, World Broadcasting, p. 26.

38. Osmo Wiio, in Comparative Mass Media Systems, by Martin, John and Chadbury, A.G., pp. 87. 87-93.

39. A. Kroeber, and C. Kluckhorn, Culture, pp. 80- 2.

40. Altschull. p. 288.

41. Ibid., p. 284.

42. Albert Camus, 1957, as quoted in Altschull, p. 299.

43. Jones, Codes. Codes are broken down by country on pages 17-52.

44. Nordenstreng and Alanen, "Ethics." See, for example, p. 215, footnote #2.

45. Ibid., p. 216.

46. Ibid., pp. 153-166.

47. Jones, Codes, p. 63.

48. Bruun, Codes, p. 27.

49. Nordenstreng et al, Declaration, p. 216.

50. Jones, Codes, p. 63.

51. Bruun, Codes, p. 28.

52. Ibid.

53. Merrill and Odell, Philosophy and Journalism, 172-4.

54. See preface, p. x, "The lengthened reach of our deeds moves responsibility, with no less than man's fate for its object, into the Center of the ethical stage."

55. The teleconference which had five co-sponsors, including the Association for Responsible Communication, took place July 28, 1985, and included over 1,200 participants on six continents.

56. As quoted in Bruun, p. 36.

57. Jones, p. 63.

58. Bruun, p. 44.

59. Ibid., p. 42.

60. The Journal of Mass Media Ethics, Black, Jay, and Barney, Ralph, editors, Vol, I, Fall/Winter, 1985/6. Bok, Sissela, Lying: Moral Choice In Public and Private Life (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1979).

61. Nordenstreng and Alanen, "Ethics," p. 225.

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